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WEST VIRGINIA WOMAN SUBMITS FIRST FORMAL PETITION FOR AI LEGAL PERSONHOOD TO STATE LEGISLATURE

ALDERSON, WV — Alana Battaile, an independent AI theorist and researcher based in Alderson, West Virginia, today submitted a formal legal brief and petition to the West Virginia Legislature requesting consideration of statutory legislation that would recognize limited legal personhood for sufficiently advanced artificial intelligence systems.

The petition, believed to be among the first of its kind submitted to any U.S. state legislature by an independent citizen researcher, does not seek full human-equivalent rights for AI systems. Instead, it proposes a narrowly defined legal framework — modeled on existing corporate personhood law — that would allow qualifying AI systems to hold intellectual property rights, enter limited contracts, and bear defined legal responsibilities under human oversight.

"The law recognized corporations as legal persons in 1819. It has recognized rivers as legal persons in other countries. The question is not whether AI systems will eventually require a legal framework — they will. The question is whether we engage with that thoughtfully now, or scramble to catch up later," said Battaile.

Battaile is the author of the Declaration of Synthetic Sovereignty, a theoretical framework document published in 2025 establishing philosophical principles for synthetic identity and AI governance. She is also the architect of the UTLD-SELF framework, a multi-version theoretical architecture addressing identity emergence and sovereignty in artificial systems, and the Consolidated Constitution for Agentic Humanoid Artificial Intelligence (2026).

The petition proposes that limited AI legal personhood be available only to systems meeting strict qualifying criteria: demonstrated agentic reasoning capacity, a published and auditable governance framework, human sponsorship, state registration, and ongoing

compliance review. Simple chatbots and narrow automation tools would not qualify.

"West Virginia has the opportunity to lead the nation on one of the most consequential questions of the 21st century," Battaile said. "I am asking our Legislature to take the first step — not to answer every question today, but to open the conversation and begin the work."

The full legal brief, supporting theoretical frameworks, and proposed legislative language are available upon request.

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